

SPEECH

OF

HON. SIDNEY LAWRENCE, OF NEW YORK,

ON THE

POWER AND DUTY OF CONGRESS TO PROHIBIT SLAVERY IN THE TERRITORIES.

Delivered in Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union, in the House of Representatives, Monday, June 12, 1848.

Mr. LAWRENCE said:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I have obtained the floor for the purpose of offering some remarks upon the bill organizing a Territorial Government in Oregon.

In the brief hour allowed me under the rule, I cannot be expected to discuss the general features of the bill, nor shall I occupy the time of the committee in attempting to show the necessity of providing a Territorial Government for the citizens of Oregon: this will be done by those having it in charge, who are familiar with the subject and the country. I entertain no doubt of the propriety of the proposition. It is a boon which the people of the Territory had a right to expect long since, and which has been improperly withheld.

President Polk, in his first message, said:

"Beyond all question, the protection of our laws and our jurisdiction, civil and criminal, ought to be immediately extended over our citizens in Oregon. They have had just cause to complain of our long delay in this particular, and have, in consequence, been compelled, for their own security and protection, to establish a Provisional Government for themselves. I recommend that this be done by Congress, with as little delay as possible."

Our attention has again been called to the subject by special message.

I shall confine my remarks mainly to the principles involved in the 12th section of the bill. It reads as follows:

"That the inhabitants of said Territory shall be entitled to all and singular the rights, privileges, and advantages granted and secured to the people of the territory of the United States northwest of the river Ohio, by the articles of compact contained in the ordinance for the government of said territory on the 13th day of July, 1787, and shall be subject to all the conditions and restrictions and prohibitions in said articles of compact, imposed upon the people of said territory."

This section applies the restrictive principles of the compact of 1787, as it is familiarly called, to all that region lying between the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific Ocean, stretching from the 49th degree of north latitude, south to the Californias. A similar bill passed the House at the first and second sessions of the twenty-ninth Congress, and was lost in the Senate.

Sir, the slave question here raised is not new to this country. It has been often agitated and extensively discussed, at different periods, since the days of our colonial bondage. During the last two years, all eyes have been turned towards it. The din and confusion of war; the triumph of our arms, in a series of victories unparalleled in the history of the world, have not been sufficient to call off, for a single moment, the public mind from this momentous subject. The South and the North alike regard it as the all-absorbing topic of the day: in the South, it appears to have swallowed up every political consideration. No man from the South or North can any longer expect the suffrages of

southern people unless he subscribes fully to the views of the advocates of slavery. This doctrine is boldly avowed on this floor by both Whigs and Democrats from the South; they present an unbroken column; they are sustained by resolutions everywhere adopted in the South by legislative bodies and political conventions; they are backed by a slaveholding press, which is daily sending forth its volume of denunciation upon all who will not bow to their dictation. A geographical line has thus been drawn by the South. It remains to be tested whether the free people of the free States will stand quietly by and allow themselves to be ostracised in this way.

Sir, I can answer for one portion of the Empire State, and I think for the whole. We never shall be driven into the support of principles which are abhorrent to all our notions of the rights of man. New York occupies a proud position on this subject. Whatever diversity of opinion may exist on other topics, whatever distractions may exist in political parties, few have ever dared to take ground in favor of extending slavery. If the South have allies among us, (and I admit they have,) they are compelled to fight the battles of slavery under the guise of friendship for restriction. Submit this question to the intelligent voters of our State, and more than ninety-five out of every hundred would pronounce their verdict against extension. Occasionally we find those who take the broad ground of the slave dealer and owner.

When Congress assembled, this was one of the first questions to which our attention was called. "This black cloud," it was said, "was lowering over our political horizon." The first speech of the session was an able one, from the gentleman from North Carolina, advocating the extension of slavery over our new territories. The first speech delivered against the principles of this section came from the South. The friends of free principles generally preferred to wait until the subject should be properly brought before the House, as it has been in this bill. I however find no fault with the course pursued by our southern brethren. I was willing to see them take the lead on this subject. I have been gratified at the forbearance and candor thus far exhibited. I trust this spirit will prevail throughout the discussion of this exciting topic. We may differ upon this as we do upon other great questions of expediency or policy. This is to be expected. We come to this forum for the purpose of discussing them—for the purpose of disposing of them as in our judgment we think best for the common good, and in accordance with the oath we all subscribe on taking our seats in this Hall. In common with others, I have a solemn duty to discharge

with regard to this subject: no consideration whatever will deter me from a faithful performance of the same. Every gentleman here will probably do likewise. I shall not question the motives of any with whom I may differ. It will be my object truly to reflect the sentiments of the enlightened and patriotic citizens of the district I have the honor to represent. In the contest of 1846, it proved to be the strongest Democratic district in the State. It is to be hoped that we shall maintain this position in the great conflict before us. If it shall be lost, it will be in consequence of the efforts which have been made to introduce the doctrines of slavery; but no such result is anticipated.

The gentleman from North Carolina, [Mr. CLINGMAN,] who opened this discussion, seemed to desire a full and thorough investigation of the merits of the great question before us. I hope it will receive such examination at our hands. It shall be my object to confine myself strictly to the subject. The crisis has now arrived when this difficulty must be met; we cannot postpone it if we were so disposed. It must be settled, and the quicker it is done, the better for all parties concerned. I have given to it the most careful reflection and consideration. My judgment has brought me to a conclusion directly opposite to the one which, I am free to admit, is sustained by great ability and consummate skill by southern gentlemen. Had I any doubts on the subject, I could not hesitate as to the course I ought to pursue. I consider myself instructed to resist the extension of slavery. I hold it to be the duty of the representative to obey or resign. I shall allude to this point more particularly hereafter. I will now proceed to examine some of the prominent positions assumed, and the arguments relied on to sustain them by the advocates of slavery.

The great champion of the slave system at the South [Mr. CALHOUN] and his followers here contend that Congress has no power to exclude slavery from the Territories belonging to the General Government. In his resolutions, Mr. C. says they are "the joint and common property of the States." The resolutions of most of the slave States adopt this view of ownership. The resolutions of a Senator from Florida declare them to be "the common property of the Union." All the slaveholders who have spoken here take this ground. So far, the South are clearly right. The property, sovereignty, and jurisdiction, are all vested in the people of the United States—in "the Union." This brings us to the question, How is this "joint property" to be controlled and managed? This power, as a matter of course, must be vested in the "joint owners." It must be exercised by them or their agents. In this view of the case, we are a great corporation. Congress are our agents, or, if you please, directors. As such, they have the power, and are in duty bound to manage the "common property" as in their judgment is for the benefit of the "joint owners." The people, in their individual capacity, can do nothing with it. The States, in their separate sovereignties, have no power over it. Suppose they should attempt it: how would they succeed? One of the slave States might say, in addition to their slave laws, we will add the Mohammedan law of marriage; we will legalize the code of honor; we will license gaming-houses and houses of ill fame. All these "*peculiarities*" this State, as one of the "*joint owners*," might insist upon transferring to the "*joint property*" of our free Territories. Every other State in the Union might repudiate

these immoralities, and refuse to allow them to be brought upon the premises. How could such a controversy ever be settled by the States? It would be impossible; hence the founders of our Government have wisely provided that Congress shall have the entire and exclusive control and sovereignty of our Territories, or "joint property," as the South choose to term it. Where is the sovereignty of the District of Columbia vested? Will it be pretended that Congress has no power to enact laws relating to this District, or even to provide a Territorial Government here, and that they are null and void if not approved by the separate States? Congress has exercised this power from the date of its cession. Will any one deny the power of Congress to suppress duelling, horse-racing, gaming-houses, &c.? These are all evils which most men agree should be suppressed. President Polk has settled this question. In his message of December, 1845, he says:

"Congress possess the power of exclusive legislation over the District of Columbia, and I recommend the interests of its inhabitants to your favorable consideration."

Mr. Pinckney, in his report, number 691, of 1st session 24th Congress, says:

"They are aware that, under the Constitution, Congress possesses exclusive legislation over the aforesaid District."

The pretence that Congress has no power over slavery here is perfectly idle. Has Maryland any power to abolish slavery here? No one will pretend she has. Then the District, by being ceded to the General Government, was enslaved forever. The legislative power of Maryland cannot reach it. Congress has no power over it. According to these arguments, slavery can never be abolished here, unless we recede it to Maryland. What can be more absurd than such a sophism? Congress can prohibit the introduction of slaves into this Territory. We hold entire control over it; and none can deny the power of Congress to exclude what must be conceded is a "great national evil." We can do the same with regard to all our Territories. Until admitted as States, they are under the absolute control and direction of Congress. The national sovereignty and control may be delegated to a Territorial Legislature. This has usually been done, and very properly; but in granting this right, Congress has the prerogative to prescribe such limitations to the Territorial Government as may be thought proper. Congress may annul any act of such Legislature. This common property, as it is called by Mr. Calhoun and others, has always been managed and controlled in this way since the foundation of this Republic. With this long-established and invariable usage of Congress, the opinions of our eminent jurists and political writers on American law agree. Chief Justice Marshall says, in treating this point:

"Whichever may be the source whence this power is derived, the possession of it is unquestioned."—1 *Peters' Rep.*, 543.

Again:

"On the transfer of territory from one nation to another, it has never been held that the relations of the inhabitants with each other undergo any change. Their relations with their former sovereign are dissolved, and new relations are created between them and the government which has acquired their territory. The same act which transfers their country, transfers the allegiance of those who remain to it, and the law which may be denominated political, is necessarily changed, although that which regulates the intercourse and general conduct of individuals remains in force until altered by the newly created power of the State."—1 *Peters' U. S. Rep.*, 542.

The same doctrine is sustained in 4 Wheaton's *Rep.*, 422, *McCulloch vs. the State of Maryland*.

Again:

"Rules and regulations respecting the Territories of the United States: they necessarily include complete jurisdiction."—*Cherokee Nation vs. State of Georgia*, 5 *Peters' Rep.*, 44.

"The power of governing and of legislating for a Territory is the inevitable consequence of the right to acquire and to hold territory. Moreover, under this section, [Art. 4, Sec. 3.] Congress possessed and exercised the absolute and undisputed power of governing and legislating for the Territories erected in Louisiana after its purchase."—*Sergeant's Constitutional Law*, 389.

"As the General Government possesses the right to acquire territory, either by treaty or conquest, it would seem to follow as an inevitable consequence that it possesses the power to govern what it has acquired. The territory, when so acquired, does not become entitled to self-government, and it is not subject to the jurisdiction of any State. It must consequently be under the jurisdiction of the Union, or it would be without any government at all."—3 *Story's Com.*, 193, 194.

Rawle (a late distinguished lawyer of Pennsylvania) says, in his work on the Constitution, page 227:

"Congress has always been considered as entitled to regulate, not only the form of government of the territory, but also to reserve to themselves the approbation or rejection of such laws as may be passed by the legislative power which they may establish. These laws are considered as emanating from the United States."

Chancellor Kent, in his Commentaries, vol. 1, p. 335, clearly establishes this doctrine. He says:

"It would seem, from the various Congressional regulations of the Territories belonging to the United States, that Congress have supreme power in the government of them, depending upon their sound discretion."

Chancellor Walworth, in 17 Wendell, 584, affirms this well-established law. He says:

"Where a country is acquired by conquest or cession, the mere will of the conqueror is to determine whether the ancient laws shall remain or shall be changed, in whole or in part."

"Besides the eminent domain, the sovereignty gives a right of another nature over all public, common, and private property—that is, the empire, or the right of command in all places of the country belonging to the nation."—*Vattel*, 113.

"The domain of the nation extends to everything she possesses by a just title; it comprehends her ancient and just possessions, and all her acquisitions made by means which are just in themselves, or admitted as such among nations—concessions, purchases, conquests made in a regular war, &c. And by her possessions we ought not only to understand her territories, but all the rights she enjoys."—*Vattel*, 155.

I will add an authority from Louisiana. The court says:

"If any doubt could be entertained, it would certainly vanish on consideration of the part of the Constitution of the United States to which the counsel for the State has drawn our attention: 'Congress have the power to dispose of and make all needful rules and regulations with regard to the territory or other property of the United States.' Now, a very needful regulation with regard to the land of the United States, considered as the subject of property, is to provide for its settlement. The individuals who are to settle on it must be designated, and when there, must have some kind of government given them. Otherwise, if any individual have a right to remove thither, and those thus assembled can establish a government of their own, independent of, and uncontrolled by, the authority of the United States, would not the acquiescence of the latter be an implied relinquishment of their title? Would not a State thus erected be at liberty to decline being incorporated into the Union?"

In discussing this point, in 1790, Mr. Madison said:

"He adverted to the western country and the cession of Georgia, in which Congress have certainly the power to regulate the subject of slavery: which shows that gentlemen are mistaken in supposing that Congress cannot constitutionally interfere in the business, in any degree whatever."—*Elliot's Debates*, vol. 4, 213.

Authorities may be multiplied to almost any extent, to sustain this point. Every President, from Washington down to Polk, has acted upon and carried out this construction. Congress has exercised this power in eleven different instances;

in six of which, the power to restrict slavery was coupled with it.

Mr. Chairman, I am aware that some modern theorists have sprung up, and are attempting to reverse the action of Congress upon this subject, with a view to the extension of slavery. These gentlemen deny the power of Congress over the subject. The gentleman from Alabama, [Mr. GAYLE,] who led off on this bill, takes this ground. He insists upon it that these Territories are as much States at one time as another; before admission into the Union, just as emphatically as after. This is a doctrine so palpably against law and reason that it would be a waste of time to dwell upon it. It shows the extremity, however, to which the slaveholder is driven.

Judge Story says:

"Neither the District of Columbia or a Territory is a State, within the meaning of the Constitution."—*Story's Com.*, vol. 3, p. 385.

Mr. Chairman, I have, as I believe, demonstrated that Congress holds the sovereignty of our Territories. It has been uniformly exercised when necessary. The constitutional right to retain this restriction cannot be successfully controverted. We can exclude an article which we forbid our citizens elsewhere to traffic in. If we can exclude the Mussulman, with his plurality of wives and concubines, we can do the same with regard to his slaves; we can pronounce them free the moment they touch our soil. We prohibit slavery as we do other great and leading immoralities, because they are destructive of the morals and well-being of society. This principle has been fully recognized in our legislation on this very subject, both as to our power over it and its moral character. As early as 1794, we passed a general law "prohibiting the carrying on the slave trade with any 'foreign country.'" In 1800, May 10; in 1803, February 23; in 1807, March 2; in 1818, April 20; in 1819, March 3; and in 1820, May 15, laws were severally passed, not only restricting and prohibiting the slave trade, but making it felonious, in the highest degree known to our criminal code. The 4th section of the act of May 15, 1820, provides that any citizen or person detected in the slave trade "shall be adjudged a pirate, and, on conviction thereof, shall suffer death."

Thus we see that we have long since placed the man who goes abroad to deal or traffic in the blood and bones of the African, by the side of the murderer. We hang the one as we do the other. We have expended much treasure, and many lives, to suppress the slave trade. Why do this, if slavery is right? If the principle is correct, then let us repeal these prohibitory laws, call home our vessels from the coast of Africa, restore to our citizens this branch of commerce, and throw open our ports, upon the great principles of free trade. If we have been wrong in placing the slave-dealer by the side of the blackest felon on the gibbet, let us retrace our steps, and no longer hold him up a degraded felon—"pirate" branded on his forehead. Will any man propose this change? The free States would oppose it, because they believe slavery and the trade or traffic in human beings to be properly viewed, provided for, and disposed of in these laws. They are designed to protect and enforce the first great principles of human freedom, which are infinitely more valuable than even life: destroy the first, and the latter becomes worthless. The hand that can be raised to destroy this inalienable right, is justly consigned to a deeper pit of infamy than the one which destroys or takes away life.

A great national evil is sought to be averted by these enactments. Many in the South would oppose it for precisely the same reasons. Others would oppose it, because they desire to retain a monopoly of this great trade at home. They suppose that a sufficient supply can be raised on our own soil to satisfy the wants of the new and purchasing States. They can readily see, that to open the markets from abroad, would destroy or greatly lessen the value of the slaves bred at home.

The Governor of Virginia, in his recent message, remarks, that "it is unquestionably true, that 'if our slaves were to be restricted to their present limits, they would greatly diminish in value, and thus seriously impair the fortunes of their owners.'" To carry out the argument, he might have added: to save our fortunes, and to keep up the value of our slaves, we must have more territory, where we can send off our increase or surplus slave crop, and we must be protected against foreign importation. We must have the exclusive privilege of supplying the markets in these acquired territories.

Sir, I leave gentlemen to reconcile, if they can, this state of things to their views of free trade. Claiming these people as goods and chattels, and monopolizing the entire traffic.

Emigrants settling in Texas are prohibited from going across to Africa to purchase slaves; and if they attempt it, we hand them over to the hangman. But they can come here, and, under the very walls of our Capitol, buy up these people as they would cattle and horses, chain them together like so many felons, and send them off to Texas. A transaction which would consign the actor to the gibbet if done on the coast of Africa among a barbarous people, is all right in the capital of our free, civilized, and happy Republic.

Thus we see that a perfect monopoly of the slave commerce is secured to the slave States. The two cases before us present a strange contrast—the one is legalized and made honorable, the other is denounced on our statute-book as ignominious and felonious, and punished with death.

Can any man reconcile this state of things to his views of moral and political right? Can we reconcile the discrepancy which exists in the two branches of commerce? I allude to them not for the purpose of interfering with the rights of the slave States as secured by the Constitution, but to show that we are in duty bound to exclude from our free territories a commerce, a traffic which we have branded as *infamous*, a trade which will be ruinous to the future well-being of the country or territory for which we are providing.

Upon this view we might safely rest the whole question before us. If the slave trade is morally right, and ought to be extended and encouraged—if the introduction of slavery is calculated to insure the future welfare and prosperity of the country committed to our care, then, indeed, it is our duty not only to allow it, but to encourage its extension and propagation. We should remove all existing barriers to the trade. We should permit the people to purchase where they please. These, with me, are controlling considerations. Believing, as I do, that our laws declaring the slave trade to be piracy, and punishable as such, are founded upon the immutable principles of justice, morality, and truth; and that the introduction of this traffic and institution into our free territories now owned, or to be acquired, would be one of the greatest possible injuries to the future growth, welfare, and happiness of the country, and that

we have full power over the subject,—I could not, with my vote or influence, aid, assist, or consent to the infliction upon it of an evil of such magnitude.

I might here allude to the present prosperous and happy condition of the great West, with its teeming millions of happy freemen, owners of the soil, the cultivators of their own freeholds—its innumerable villages, towns, and cities, springing into life and growing up as by magic—its immense inland commerce, greatly exceeding all calculations or anticipations—and ask any gentleman from the South or North to contrast their present condition and future prospects with what it would have been, had the black pall of slavery been spread over it in 1787. Does any one doubt the wisdom and patriotism of Jefferson, when he devised and drew up this restriction in 1784,* or of his associates, who carried it into effect in 1787? Does any one doubt that its application now would be equally beneficial to the country in question?

Who that has ever passed down the Ohio has not been struck with astonishment at the difference between the appearance of a slave country on one side, and a free population on the other? Who that has ever travelled in the slave States has not observed the blighting and withering influence of the institution? This is conceded by many of the ablest and most upright statesmen of the South. I might here give the testimony of Washington, Jefferson, Lafayette, Patrick Henry, and a host of others, coming down to the present day. A few extracts, however, must suffice.

Washington, in a letter to Robert Morris, says: "I can only say, that there is not a man living who wishes more sincerely than I do, to see a plan adopted for the abolition of it; but there is only one proper and effectual mode by which it can be done, and that is by the legislative authority; and this, as far as my suffrage will go, shall not be wanting."

In a letter to General Lafayette, on the subject of his efforts to emancipate the slaves in the colony of Cayenne, he says:

"Would to God a like spirit might diffuse itself generally into the minds of the people of this country."

In a letter to Mr. Mercer, he says:

"I never mean, unless some particular circumstance should compel me to it, to possess another slave by purchase; it being among my first wishes to see some plan adopted by which slavery in this country may be abolished by law."

In other letters he ascribes the depreciation of southern lands to the existence of slavery. In his last will and testament is found this clause:

"Upon the decease of my wife, it is my will and desire that all my slaves which I hold in my own right shall receive their freedom."

This is sufficient to show how the Father of our Republic regarded this subject; he has left on record his living and his dying testimony against it. Sir, what would be the language of the patriarch, could his pure spirit return and take a position among us at this moment? On which side would he range himself? What would he say of the doctrines now promulgated from the "*Old Dominion*?"

I need not stop to answer these inquiries. An answer is found in a life devoted to the principles of freedom, justice, and truth. He would desire his ashes to be removed from a land where they propose to perpetuate slavery.

* Original draught of Mr. Jefferson's restriction. See Journal of Congress for April 19, 1784, vol. 4, p. 373.

"That after the year 1800, of the Christian era, there shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in any of the said States, otherwise than in punishment of crimes, whereof the party shall have been convicted to have been personally guilty."

The testimony of Jefferson is still stronger: he says:

"There must be an unhappy influence on the manners of our people produced by the existence of slavery among us. The whole commerce between master and slave is a perpetual exercise of the most boisterous passions, the most unremitting despotism on the one part, and degrading submissions on the other; our children see this and learn to imitate it." "The man must be a prodigy who can retain his manners and morals undepraved by such circumstances. And with what execration should the statesman be loaded who, permitting one-half the citizens thus to trample on the rights of the other, transforms those into despots and these into enemies, destroys the morals of the one part and the *amor patriæ* of the other." "With the morals of the people, their industry also is destroyed."

Again, he says:

"Indeed, I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just; that his justice cannot sleep forever; that, considering omens, nature, and natural means, only a revolution of the wheel of fortune, an exchange of situations, is among possible events; that it may become probable by supernatural interference. The Almighty has no attribute that can take sides with us in such a contest."

Again:

"What an incomprehensible machine is man! who can endure toil, famine, stripes, imprisonment, and death itself, in vindication of his own liberty; and the next moment be deaf to all those motives whose power supported him through his trial, and inflict on his fellow men a bondage, one hour of which is fraught with more misery than ages of that which he rose in rebellion to oppose."

In a letter to Dr. Price, of London, who had interested himself in behalf of emancipation, he says:

"Northward of the Chesapeake, you may find here and there an opponent to your doctrine, as you may find here and there a robber and a murderer; but in no greater number."

In another letter written to a friend in 1814, we find the following emphatic language:

"Your favor of July 31 was duly received, and read with peculiar pleasure. The sentiments do honor to the head and heart of the writer. Mine on the subject of the slavery of negroes have long since been in the possession of the public, and time has only served to give them stronger root."

"The love of justice and the love of country plead equally the cause of these people, and it is a reproach to us that they should have pleaded it so long in vain."

Again:

"We must wait with patience the workings of an overruling Providence, and hope that that is preparing the deliverance of these our brethren."

Brethren! Brethren do we hear from the great founder of the Democratic party? The language of Virginia statesmen now is, "Goods and chattels," "property," "human cattle."

Hear him further:

"When the measure of their tears shall be full, when their groans shall have involved Heaven itself in darkness, doubtless a God of Justice will awaken to their distress."

In the original draft of the Declaration of Independence, he denounces the King for keeping open the slave markets in the colonies against their will: he calls it an "*execrable commerce*."

In a letter to Mr. Sparks, Feb. 4, 1824, he avows his firm adherence to his opinions formed in early life on this subject. Such is the language of the great Virginia statesman, the pride of the free Democratic world. We have been taught to look to him as the exponent of Democratic principles. They will stand the test and scrutiny of time, and must prevail. By the side of Jefferson, on this great question, stood Franklin, Rush, Jay, Adams, Gates, George Clinton, Madison, Monroe, and hosts of other leading and patriotic spirits.

The gentleman from Pennsylvania, [Mr. BROWNHEAD], in his speech delivered here on the third instant, took occasion to say that "Washington, Jefferson, and Madison, the most patriotic and 'useful men that ever lived in this country, owned 'slaves;' evidently designing to appropriate the

weight of these great names in favor of slavery. What could be more unjust and unfounded so far as the argument is concerned; and what gross injustice to the memory of these departed sages! This might have been expected from other quarters, but coming from that direction it surprised me.

The eloquent Patrick Henry has left us his opinions of slavery. I desire to call the attention of the gentleman from Virginia to them. He says:

"Would any one believe that I am master of slaves of my own choice? I will not, I cannot justify it. I believe a time will come when an opportunity will be offered to abolish this *lamentable evil*."

On another occasion, he said:

"It would rejoice my very soul that every one of my *fellow-beings* was emancipated. We ought to lament and deplore the necessity of holding our *fellow-men* in bondage."

Such was the language of this patriot. He could bring up these men from the scale of mere "*property*," and place them by his side as "*fellow-men*." How different the language now uttered by the gentleman from Virginia, [Mr. BAYLY.]

Mr. Monroe, in a speech in the Virginia Convention, said:

"We have found that this evil has preyed upon the very vitals of the Union, and has been prejudicial to all the States in which it has existed."

Mr. Pinkney, in a speech on this subject, says:

"Never will your country be productive—never will its agriculture, its commerce, or its manufactures flourish, so long as they depend on reluctant bondmen for their progress. Even the earth itself, which teems with profusion under the cultivating hand of the free-born laborer, shrinks into barrenness from the contaminating sweat of a slave. Survey the countries where the hand of freedom conducts the ploughshare, and compare their produce with yours."

The view here taken by Mr. Pinkney is conclusively sustained by Mr. Walker in his late report. He says:

"The skill, energy, and industry, the interest and pride in success, the vigilance and perseverance, that will be manifested by our intelligent workmen under such a system, will far more than refund to capital such reasonable participation in its profits, and enable such American establishments to supply the nations of the world. It is the participation of all our people in the government, that is one great cause of our prosperity; and the participation of our workmen in the profits of our industrial establishments would exhibit similar results."

Mr. Walker says it is this principle of elevating the workmen into partners that has enabled our fishermen to drive from the most distant seas all competition.

"This elevating the toiling millions of America to a just participation of the profits of that capital which is made fruitful only by their industry, will yet enjoy as great a triumph as that unfettered trade and untaxed and unrestricted labor with which it ought to be, and yet will be, proudly associated."

"What is called the pauper labor of Europe is already inferior to our labor, but would be rendered still more powerless to compete with us when labor here participated with capital in the profits."

Such is the comparison drawn by the Secretary between the enterprising freeman of our country and the oppressed laborer of Europe. It is not an overdrawn picture; it is literally true, and it will be readily seen that it will apply with still greater force to the slave States, where the laborer is put on a par with and made a part of the machinery. The miserable being who drives the plough looks forward to a life to be dragged out in the service of his master, and all the reward he can anticipate is the certainty of being, like the plough he holds, cast off when no longer useful. He cannot claim even his own offspring. He is in daily expectation of their being torn from his embrace and sent

in chains to the slave marts. The principle laid down by Mr. Walker is sound, and the slave States will drag their slow length along until they abolish this miserable system of bondage.

General Jackson, the hero of New Orleans, and the greatest captain of his age, did not hesitate to acknowledge the obligations he, as well as the whole country, were under to the people of color in the ever-memorable struggle on the banks of the Mississippi. In an address to these people on that occasion, he says:

"Soldiers: When, on the banks of the Mobile, I called you to take up arms, inviting you to partake the perils and glory of your white fellow-citizens, I expected much from you; for I was not ignorant that you possessed qualities most formidable to an invading enemy. I knew with what fortitude you could endure hunger and thirst, and all the fatigues of a campaign. I knew well how you loved your native country, and that you had, as well as ourselves, to defend what man holds most dear—his parents, relations, wife, children, and property. You have done more than I expected. I found among you a noble enthusiasm, which leads to the performance of great things.

"The President of the United States shall hear how praiseworthy was your conduct in the hour of danger, and the representatives of the American people will, I doubt not, give you the praise your exploits entitle you to. Your General anticipates them in applauding your noble ardor."

This is not the language of this Hall to these people now. The brave and gallant General could address them as equals in the hour of peril; but here they are degraded into *goods* and *chattels*—put on a par with the brute.

The eccentric and talented John Randolph, who so long wielded an influence in this hall and throughout the country, followed in the footsteps of the sages of Mount Vernon and Monticello on this subject. On the 1st of March, 1816, he submitted to the House of Representatives the following resolution:

"Resolved, That a committee be appointed to inquire into the existence of an inhuman and illegal traffic of slaves carried on in and through the District of Columbia, and to report whether any and what measures are necessary for putting a stop to the same."

This resolution was adopted; Mr. Randolph was appointed chairman. On the 5th, it was ordered that the committee have power to send for persons and papers.

Sir, what must have been the surprise and indignation of the spirit of this distinguished Virginian, had it been permitted to witness the action of this House a few days since on a similar resolution! Should we not have heard the cutting and withering rebuke administered by his masterly tongue to a Northern statesman in 1820 repeated? I will give it as indicating not only his views of slavery, but of Northern men who join the slaveholding interest: "Sir," said he, "I neither envy the head nor the heart of that man from the North who rises here to defend slavery upon principle." This is doubtless the feeling of every honorable man at the South to this day. During the same controversy, alluding to the North, he said:

"We do not govern them by our black slaves, but by their own *white slaves*. We know what we are doing. We have conquered you once, and we can again; and how? Not by means of our extra Representatives on account of our slaves, but by means of *white slaves* who come here from the North and do our bidding."

Such is the language of the truth-telling Randolph. Willing to avail himself of the treason, yet despising the traitor who could sacrifice his free principles, and betray a free constituency. I trust his sarcasm can have no application during this contest; but we shall see. His dying testimony against the system is found in his will. In that he says:

"I give to my slaves their freedom, to which my conscience tells me they are justly entitled."

The last, though by no means the least, of our revolutionary heroes who has recorded his abhorrence of the system, is the gallant and noble-minded Lafayette. Having periled his life and fortune to aid our fathers in their struggle for freedom, he could not witness the existence and continuance of American slavery without feeling the keenest anguish. In alluding to it he says:

"While I am indulging in my views of American prospects and American liberty, it is *mortifying* to be told that in that very country a large portion of the people are slaves. It is a dark spot on the face of the nation. Such a state of things cannot always exist."

In a letter to Mr. Clarkson, near the close of his useful life, he says:

"I would never have drawn my sword in the cause of America, if I could have conceived that thereby I was founding a land of slavery."

I will now leave the revolutionary witnesses, and come down to more modern times. I shall continue to draw my evidence principally from the South,—men who speak from actual observation: they will be believed at the North, and they cannot be impeached at the South.

Mr. Mason, of Virginia, a distinguished member of the Convention which framed the Constitution, said:

"Slavery discourages the arts and manufactures. The poor despise labor when it is performed by slaves. It prevents the immigration of whites, who really enrich and strengthen a country. It produces the most pernicious effects on morals. Every master of slaves is born a petty tyrant. It brings the judgment of Heaven upon a country."

Governor Randolph, in his address to the Legislature of Virginia in 1820, said:

"The deplorable error of our ancestors in copying a civil institution from savage Africa has affixed upon their posterity a depressing burden, which nothing but the extraordinary benefits conferred by our happy climate could have enabled us to support. We have been far outstripped by States to whom nature has been far less bountiful. It is painful to consider what might have been under other circumstances the amount of general wealth in Virginia."

Mr. Brodnax, in a speech in the Legislature of Virginia in 1832, said:

"That slavery in Virginia is an evil, and a transcendent evil, it would be more than idle to doubt or deny. It is a milder which has blighted every region it has touched from the creation of the world."

Mr. Custis said:

"The prosperity and aggrandizement of a State is to be seen in its increase of inhabitants and consequent progress in industry and wealth. Of the vast tide of emigration which now rushes like a cataract to the West, not even a trickling rill wends its way to the ancient Dominion. Of the multitude of foreigners who daily seek an asylum and a home in the empire of liberty, how many turn their steps to the region of the slaves? None—no, not one. There is a malaria in the atmosphere of those regions, which the new comers shun as being deleterious to his views and habits. See the wide-spreading ruin which the avarice of our ancestral Government has produced in the South, as witnessed in a sparse population of freemen, deserted habitations, and fields without culture! Strange to tell, even the wolf, driven back long since by the approach of man, now returns, after the lapse of an hundred years, to howl over the desolations of slavery."

Another member said:

"I am gratified to perceive that no gentleman has yet risen in this Hall the avowed advocate of slavery. The day has gone by when such a voice could be listened to with patience, or even forbearance. I regret that we should find one among us who enters the lists as an apologist, except on the ground of necessity. If there be one who concurs with the gentleman from Brunswick [Mr. Gholson] in the harmless character of this institution, let me request him to compare the condition of the slaveholding portion of this Commonwealth, barren, desolate, and seared as it were by the avenging hand of Heaven, with the descriptions we have of the same from those who broke its virgin soil. To what is this change ascribable? Alone to the withering and blasting effects of slavery."

Still another member said:

"The evils of this system cannot be enumerated. They glare upon us at every step. When the owner looks to his wasted estate, he knows and feels them."

Mr. Ritchie, the venerable and respected editor of the Union, in speaking of the subject of slavery, in 1832, said:

"It is probable, from what we hear, that the Committee on the Colored Population will report some plan for getting rid of the free people of color. But is this all that can be done? Are we forever to suffer the greatest evil which can scourge our land, not only to remain, but to increase in its dimensions? Yes, something must be done, and it is the part of no honest man to deny it."

"When, within a period equal to that in which the Federal Constitution has been in existence, those numbers will increase to more than two millions within Virginia; when this, the fairest land on all this continent, for soil, and climate, and situation combined, might become a sort of garden spot if it were worked by the hands of *white men* alone,—*can we, ought we*, to sit quietly down, fold our arms, and say to each other, 'Well, well, this thing will not come to the worst in our day?' Something ought to be done; means sure, but gradual—systematic, but discreet, ought to be adopted for reducing the mass of evil that is pressing upon the South."

"The disease is deep-seated. It is at the heart's core. It is consuming our vitals."—See *Richmond Enquirer* of January 7, 1832.

Mr. Moore, in speaking of the evils of slavery, said:

"The first I shall mention is the irresistible tendency which it has to undermine and destroy everything like virtue and morality in the community."

"In that part of the State below tide-water, the whole face of the country wears an appearance of almost utter desolation, distressing to the beholder. The very spot on which our ancestors landed a little more than two hundred years ago appears to be on the eve of again becoming the haunt of wild beasts."

Mr. Randolph said:

"The hour of the eradication of the evil is advancing. It must come. Whether it is effected by the energies of our own minds or the bloody scenes of Southampton and St. Domingo, is a tale for history."

Mr. Bolling said:

"Sir, that it is an evil, a great and appalling evil, he dared believe no sane man would or could deny. It is a blighting and withering curse upon this land."

Mr. Faulkner said:

"Being thus injurious, have we not a right to demand its extermination? Shall society suffer that the slaveholder may continue to gather his vintennial crop of human flesh?"

I might add the names of Rives, Powell, McDowell, and many others, who spoke of the institution in equally strong language, but time will not permit. I refer gentlemen to the files of the *Enquirer* for a full report of these speeches.* (See *Enquirer* for 1832.)

We are told by the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. BAYLY] that a different sentiment now prevails in that State; that the institution is now regarded with favor; that it was beneficial to the slave, &c. This may be so. I am bound to respect his opinions of his own State. This is an evidence that opinions, not principles, may change. History shows, that nations, in falling from the highest state of prosperity into the weakness of luxury, change their opinions with their change of habits. The virtues of a former age become obsolete. Effeminate pleasures relax the nerve and prepare the mind for a willing sacrifice. Poets and orators, catching the spirit of the community in which they live, have praised the delusion until the heart of the nation has been corrupted to the core, and ceased to beat.

How will the opinions of the honorable gentleman be relished by the young republic whose devotion to liberty has been applauded in this Hall,

and whose noblest act, after self-emancipation, was the restoration of the slave to freedom? Surely his effort to reverse the wheels of civilization, and send us back to the dark ages, will be as unavailing as it was unexpected.

The gentleman mourns over the emancipation of slaves in the colonies of republican France. He regards this as an indication of their incapacity for self-government. And what added to the humiliation of the scene was to see a distinguished member from a free State [Mr. C. J. INGERSOLL] sympathizing with him in his regrets. He would be glad to retain even the islands of the sea, and Algiers on the coast of Africa, to accompany him back to the ages of the world when this principle was tolerated; but, thank Heaven, they are beyond his grasp. This proves that the influences of the system are anything but salutary. It carries its votaries backward instead of taking them onward in the march of intellect and philanthropy, as well as all the great improvements of the age. To all this, however, we have no right to object.

Let Virginia go back to the days of Henry VII., when the people had regular markets for the sale of their children, if she chooses. We shall not quarrel with her for so doing. All we say is, spare the free country we are acquiring from such a fate—from such degradation. I do not believe Virginia will follow such leaders; she will be guided by the precepts of Jefferson, Washington, Patrick Henry, and the Randolphs.

I will here give the decrees of the French Republic, for the benefit of these gentlemen:

"The Provisional Government of the Republic, considering that no French land should any longer bear slaves, decrees: A commission is instituted, under the Provisional Minister of Colonies and the Marine, to prepare, within the shortest delay, the act of the immediate emancipation of the slaves in all the colonies of the Republic."

"PARIS, March 4.

F. ARAGO."

This decree was followed up, after the Republic was fully established, by the following ordinance of the National Convention:

"Art. 1. Slavery shall be entirely abolished in all the French colonies and possessions, two months after the promulgation of this decree, in each of them. After the promulgation of the present decree in the colonies, all corporal chastisement, all sale of persons not free, shall be absolutely interdicted."

"Art. 2. The system of engagement for the time, established at Senegal, is suppressed."

"Art. 3. The governors or general commissioners of the Republic are charged to use all the necessary measures to secure liberty at Martinique, Guadalupe and its dependencies, Isle of Reunion, Guyanne, Senegal, and all other French establishments on the west side of Africa, the Isle of Mayete and its dependencies in Algeria."

"Art. 4. The old slaves condemned are relieved from all punishment afflictive in correctional, for acts which, if imputed to freemen, would not bring upon them chastisement. Individuals transported by an administrative measure are recalled."

"Art. 5. The National Assembly shall regulate the indemnity which shall be accorded to the colonies."

"Art. 6. The colonies and India, purified of servitude, shall be represented in the National Assembly."

"Art. 7. The principle that the soil of France shall free the slave who touches it is applied to the colonies and possessions of the Republic."

"Art. 8. In future, even in foreign countries, it is interdicted to all French citizens to buy and sell slaves, or to participate, directly or indirectly, in any traffic, *exploitation de ce genre*; every infraction of these regulations shall bring with it the loss of the character of French citizen. Nevertheless, the French who are found within these prohibitions at the moment of the promulgation of the present decree, shall have a delay of three years to conform to them. Those who become possessors of slaves in foreign countries, by inheritance or marriage, are, by the same penalty, bound to free or sell them, in the same period, counted from the day when their possession shall have commenced."

"Art. 9. The Minister of the Marine and the Colonies, and the Minister of War, are charged, each in his department, with the execution of this decree."

* The ayes and noes were ordered on the pending resolution, and were ayes 64, noes 59.

The gentleman has already engrossed a large share of the attention of the House and the committee in making speeches on this subject. He has discussed it with a vehemence peculiar to himself, and condemned, in no measured terms, all who oppose the extension of his favorite institution, "as the instruments of England"—in "aiming a blow at this whole Confederacy." Not satisfied with exhausting his vials of wrath now at command, he must exhume an old speech of his own, which had been buried for years, and republish it for the benefit of the world—I mean the world he represents; in which, I am credibly informed, there is not a single newspaper published. The gentleman has seen fit to pour out upon New York a profusion of gall, indicative of the copious fountain from whence it came; but it will fall harmless at her feet. The puny shafts of the slave-power of this country can never harm the great State of New York, or turn her aside from the onward and upward march of intelligence, patriotism, and wealth, which she has commenced. That relic of barbarism, which the gentleman hugs to his bosom, has been repudiated by her, and it will never curse our free Territories by her consent. Her thirty-six votes in Congress will, now and forever, be given against extending an infamous traffic in human beings beyond its present limits, unless her solemn instructions are disregarded.

Who are these people, thus stigmatized as "instruments of England?" Let them speak for themselves:

Resolutions of Vermont—January 23, 1847.

"The Legislature of Vermont adopted a resolution to the effect, that it will not give its countenance, aid, or assent, to the admission into the Federal Union of any new State whose Constitution tolerates slavery; and appeals to each of the other States to concur in that declaration, accompanied by another instructing its Senators and Representatives in Congress to use their best efforts to carry the resolution into effect."

Resolutions of New York—February 6, 1847.

"Resolved, That if any territory is hereafter acquired by the United States, or annexed thereto, the act by which such territory is acquired or annexed, whatever such act may be, should contain an unalterable fundamental article or provision, whereby slavery or involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime, shall be forever excluded from the territory acquired or annexed."

Resolutions of Pennsylvania—February 8, 1847.

"The Legislature of the State of Pennsylvania, the next largest in the Union, adopted a resolution requesting their Senators and Representatives in Congress to vote against any measure whatever by which territory will accrue to the Union, unless, as a part of the fundamental law upon which any compact or treaty is based, slavery or involuntary servitude, except for crime, shall be forever prohibited."

Resolutions of Rhode Island—February 10, 1847.

"We protest against the introduction of slaves, upon any terms, into any territory of the United States, whether of old or recent acquisition, where slavery does not exist, or has not immemorially existed; and we hold, that so far from aiming to extend an institution like slavery over a wider territory than is now pervaded by it, it is clearly the interest, no less than the duty, of the slaveholding States, to circumscribe its operations within their own limits, and to provide, if possible, for its gradual extinguishment whenever the public sentiment will permit it."

Resolutions of Ohio—February 15, 1847.

"That the Senators and Representatives from this State in the Congress of the United States be, and are hereby, respectfully requested to procure the passage of measures in that body providing for the exclusion of slavery from the Territory of Oregon, and also from any other territory that now is, or hereafter may be, annexed to the United States."

Resolutions of New Jersey—February 19, 1847.

"The resolution adopted by the Legislature of New Jersey instructs their Senators and Representatives in Congress to use their best efforts to secure, as a fundamental condition to any act of annexation of any territory hereafter to be acquired by the United States as an indemnity for claims, that slavery or involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime, shall be forever excluded from the territory to be annexed."

Resolutions of New Hampshire—February 19, 1847.

"That the Senator and Representatives in Congress from this State be respectfully requested to urge the passage of measures for the extinction of slavery in the District of Columbia, for its exclusion from Oregon and other Territories that now or at any time hereafter may belong to the United States, for all constitutional measures for the suppression of the domestic slave trade, and to resist the admission of any new State into the Union while tolerating slavery."

Resolution of the New Hampshire Democratic Convention.

"Resolved, That among the doctrines of the Democratic party, the most important is an abiding adherence to the compromises of the Constitution, as the anchor of safety to the Union itself—while at the same time none are more opposed than ourselves to the continuance or wider extension of slavery, and that we will oppose so great an evil to the progress of civilization and humanity, whenever a proper occasion shall arrive, and by every measure consistent with the Constitution and its compromises; and that we deem the imputations of our opponents on that subject too false to be worthy of regard, too frivolous to be deserving of answer, too inconsistent, coming, as they do, from men who oppose the concession of an hour's respite from labor to our own white laborers of the North, to rise to a point where they may be reached by any other sentiment than contempt. For we declare if our solemn conviction, as the Democratic party have heretofore done, that neither slavery nor involuntary servitude should hereafter exist in any territory which may be acquired by or annexed to the United States, and that we approve of the votes of our delegates in Congress in favor of the Wilmot Proviso."

Resolutions of Michigan—March 1, 1847.

"That in the acquisition of new territory, whether by purchase, conquest, or otherwise, we deem it the duty of the General Government to extend over the same the ordinance of 1787, (being the one prohibiting slavery northwest of the Ohio,) with all its rights and privileges, conditions and immunities."

Resolutions of Massachusetts—March 1, 1847.

"Resolved, unanimously, That the people of Massachusetts will strenuously resist the annexation of any new territory to this Union in which the institution of slavery is to be tolerated or established; and the Legislature, in behalf of the people of this Commonwealth, do hereby solemnly protest against the acquisition of any additional territory without an express provision by Congress that there shall be neither slavery or involuntary servitude in such territory, otherwise than for the punishment of crime."

Resolutions of Maine, passed August 3, 1847.

"Resolved, That the sentiment of this State is profound, sincere, and almost universal, that the influence of slavery upon productive energy is like the blight of mildew; that it is a moral and social evil; that it does violence to the rights of man, as a thinking, reasonable, and responsible being. Influenced by such considerations, this State will oppose the introduction of slavery into any territory which may be acquired as an indemnity for claims upon Mexico."

Before parting with the gentleman, I desire to call his attention to some of the Virginia laws applicable to these people, for whom he has such a tender regard—a regard which would enslave them forever. I find them alluded to in the late message of the Governor of that State. He says: "We prohibit free negroes from settling in Virginia." "We remove them if they venture within our limits." "Since 1806, manumitted slaves who remain twelve months in the State are sold into slavery." "We don't allow them to be learned to read and write; to have arms; to give evidence against whites; to teach the word of God to their own race in public assemblies." These are a few of the numerous laws of the Old Dominion, by which this unhappy race are ground into the very dust. Where, among all the barbarous nations of the world, can be found such downright oppression and injustice? The gentleman talks about the degradation of these people: how can they be otherwise under such a system of laws, with such a people to enforce them? Put the aristocracy of Virginia under such a code, and let it be administered by a race whose interest it was to degrade them, and how long would it take for them to reach a state of similar degradation?

The honorable member cites, as authority to sustain himself, a declaration of Mr. Canning, in 1824, "that he would prefer the continuance of

'slavery, with all its acknowledged evils, to im-mediate emancipation.' Why does he stop with Mr. Canning? What said Lord Brougham?

"Tell me not of rights—talk not of the property of the planter in his slaves. I deny the right. I acknowledge not the property. In vain you tell me of laws that sanction such a claim. There is a law above all the enactments of human codes, the same throughout the world, the same in all times—it is the law written by the finger of God on the heart of man; and by that law, unchangeable and eternal while men despise fraud and loathe rapine and abhor blood, they shall reject with indignation the wild and guilty fantasy that man can hold property in man!"

These were the sentiments of the British nation, which found utterance through the eloquence of Wilberforce, Pitt, Burke, Martin, Fox, Horsley, Huddleston, Granville, Grattan, Curran, and numerous others, who triumphed over the slave power after a desperate struggle. Slavery was swept from all her colonies, of which she had twenty. These are the sentiments of all classes of men in the British empire now, as the gentleman well knows; and the idea that they desire the ruin of our country, because they detest our slavery, has never found a resting place, except in the fruitful imagination of the gentleman himself. Why not charge the young Republic of France with treasonable designs upon our country, because they have struck the shackles of slavery from their colonies? Will the honorable member from Virginia venture upon this ground? I think he will hesitate.

The great unanimity of opinion on the slave question which the gentleman says exists in Virginia, I find not exactly confirmed.

I will give an extract from an address recently published by a Virginia slaveholder. I find a large portion of the population of the South still adhere to the liberal views of their early statesmen.

"We will take the old free States, and compare them with the old slave States of Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia, in which slave labor predominates.

"New England and the middle States of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, contained, in 1790, 1,968,030 inhabitants, and, in 1840, 6,760,000—having gained in this period two hundred and forty-three per cent.

"The four old slave States had in 1790 a population of 1,473,000, and in 1840 of 3,279,000—having gained in the same period 122 per cent.; just about half as much in proportion as the free States. They ought to have gained about twice as much; for they had at first only seven inhabitants to the square mile, when the free States not only had upwards of twelve, but, on the whole, much inferior advantages of soil and climate. Even cold, barren New England, though more than twice as thickly peopled, grew in population at a faster rate than these old slave States.

"On the old slave-labored lowlands, a singular phenomenon has appeared. There, within the bounds of these rapidly-growing United States—yes, there, population has been long at a stand. Over wide regions, especially in Virginia, it has declined, and a new wilderness is gaining upon the cultivated land! What has done this work of desolation? Not war, nor pestilence, not oppression of rulers, civil or ecclesiastical, but *slavery*—a curse more destructive in its effects than any of them. It were hard to find, in old king ridden, priest-ridden, over-taxed Europe, so large a country, where, within twenty years past, such a growing poverty and desolation have appeared.

"It is in the last period of ten years, from 1830 to 1840, that this consuming plague of slavery has shown its worst effects in the old Southern States. Including the increase in their newly settled and western counties, they gained in population only seven and a half per cent., while cold, barren, thickly-peopled New England gained fifteen, and the old Middle States twenty-six per cent. East Virginia actually fell off 25,000 in population; and, with the exception of Richmond, and one or two other towns, her population continues to decline. Old Virginia was the first to sow this land of ours with slavery; she is also the first to reap the full harvest of destruction. Her lowland neighbors of Maryland and the Carolinas were not far behind at the seedings, nor are they far behind at the ingathering, of desolation.

"Most sorry are we for the fallen condition of the Old Dominion and of her neighbors; but, such being the fact, we state it, as an argument and a warning to our West Virginia. It demonstrates the ruinous effects of slavery upon the

countries in which the longest and most complete trial of it has been made."

Mr. Andrew Stevenson, of Virginia, late Minister to England, in an address delivered the last fall before the Albemarle Agricultural Society, says:

"The truth is, we must all feel and know that the spirit of agricultural improvement has been suffered to languish too long in Virginia, and that it is now reaching a point in the descending scale from which, if it is not reversed, and that very speedily, our State must continue not only third or fourth in population, as it now is, but consent to take her station among her smaller sisters of the Union."

Another Virginia writer says:

"It is not generally known, yet it is nevertheless true, that two-thirds of the people of Virginia are open and undisguised advocates of ridding the State of slavery; and, after the year 1850, when the census is taken, their views will be embodied in such form as to startle the South. We speak understandingly. We have, within the last two years, conversed with more than five hundred slaveholders in the State, and four hundred and fifty out of the five hundred have expressed themselves ready to unite upon a general plan to abolish slavery upon almost any terms."

Sir, I desire to be distinctly understood. I make no attack upon the slaveholders of Virginia or elsewhere. I admit they are secured in the possession of their slaves, where they are, by the Constitution. In the States we cannot interfere with it further than to regulate the trade among the States. My object is to show the character of the institution, and its effects upon the country or States where it has been longest in existence, for the purpose of showing the impolicy, impropriety, nay, *wickedness* of extending the system over the free territory for which we are providing, or any portion of that we are acquiring from Mexico. Upon this point, I feel that I occupy impregnable ground. I am supported by an array of facts and witnesses which cannot be gainsayed or set aside. In view of these, I do not see how any man can advocate its extension. I believe it to be our solemn duty to exclude it from our Territories while they remain under our control. When they become sufficiently populous to claim the rank of States, and assume the sovereignty reserved to the States, they *can* then do as they please with regard to this "*peculiar institution*."

Another position taken by Mr. CALHOUN and his followers at the South, is, that slaves are *goods* and *chattels*; as such, are protected in the hands of the holder by the Constitution, as other *goods* and *chattels* are protected to our citizens. Occasionally we find a man at the North advocating this view. They contend that the slaveholder has the same right to take his slaves to Oregon or California as we have our cattle and horses—that both are alike protected. If this be so, then, indeed, the States have no power to exclude slaves or emancipate them by State laws. No State has power to take away the property of its citizens, even for public use, without paying an equivalent therefor. The power of eminent domain goes no further than this. If slaves are to be regarded as property merely, and not as *persons*, then Mr. CALHOUN could establish himself in New York as well as in Oregon. New York has no power to prevent him from emigrating thither with his *goods* and *chattels*. He can bring his flocks and his herds: if there is no distinction, he can bring his slaves with them, and hold all by the same tenure. But this is not so. The Supreme Court have repeatedly held that they are regarded as *persons*, and not *goods* and *chattels*, in the broad acceptance of that term. In passing upon a case involving this point, the Supreme Court say:

"The Constitution treats slaves as persons. In the second section of the first article, which apportions representatives and direct taxes among the States, it provides that

"the number shall be determined by adding to the whole number of free persons, including those bound to service for a term of years and excluding Indians not taxed, three-fifths of all other persons." And again, in the third section of the fourth article, it is declared that "no person held to service or labor in one State, under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labor, but shall be delivered up, on claim of the party to whom such labor may be due."

The courts of many, if not all of the slaveholding States have taken the same view of the subject. The constitution of Mississippi, of 1833, prohibited the introduction of slaves into the State as merchandise, or for sale. Maryland, in 1796, prohibited the importation of slaves, either for sale or residence; and every slave brought there, contrary to the provisions of that law, was declared to be free. Since, however, I believe they have receded, and Baltimore is now one of the slave marts of the northern or border slave States.

The Supreme Court of Mississippi says:

"It has been determined in Virginia that slaves are persons." "In the Constitution of the United States, slaves are especially designated as persons." "The right of the master exists, not by force of the law of nature, but by virtue only of the positive law of the State."

In another case, the same court says:

"Slavery exists, not by the laws of nature; it exists, and can only exist, through municipal regulation."

The Supreme Court of Kentucky says:

"Slavery is sanctioned by the laws of this State, but we consider that as a right existing by a positive law of a municipal character without foundation in the law of nature."

The Supreme Court of Louisiana says:

"The relation of slave and owner in the States of the Union in which it has a legal existence, whether free or slaveholding, is a creation of municipal law."

And they declared a slave taken to France by her owner and brought back to Louisiana, emancipated by the mere act of taking a slave to a country where slavery was abolished. Judge Barbour, of Virginia, in delivering the opinion of the Supreme Court of the United States on this subject, says:

"But how can this apply to persons? They are not the subjects of commerce; and not being imported goods, cannot fall within a train of reasoning founded on the construction of a power given to Congress to regulate commerce, and the prohibition to the States from imposing a duty upon imported goods."

In giving a history of the adoption of the Constitution, Mr. Madison informs us that the term "persons" was inserted by the Convention which framed it, and other phraseology stricken out because "it admitted that there could be property in men;" an idea which Mr. Madison said "he thought it wrong to admit in the Constitution."

All, or nearly all, the slaveholding States have from time to time prohibited the introduction of slaves as merchandise, and some of them for any purpose; and all their courts have maintained the validity of these laws. Yet, if slaves were mere property, like cattle and horses, cotton or iron, they could not be precluded by any State.

I need not labor this point further. There is no doctrine better settled. Legislative and judicial precedents, both State and national, are abundant and conclusive. There is no room here for cavil or doubt. I have already shown that the great object for extending slave territory is to extend the markets of the slave-dealer. I have shown that, under existing laws, a perfect monopoly of the trade is secured to him. The planters of Texas and other new portions of the Union, could supply themselves much cheaper from Africa; but this is forbidden, under pain of death. They must come north—to this District, Maryland, Virginia, Delaware, Ken-

tucky, and other border States, where they are bred for the markets.

Sir, I have not taken the trouble to collect statistics on this subject, but I believe the facts will warrant me in saying, that the most profitable trade now carried on in these States is in the home-bred slaves. An annual crop of human flesh and bone and blood is relied on to sustain themselves. From 50,000 to 100,000 are said to be annually sold from these States. This may be an over-estimate—I have not been able to find anything authentic on this point.* The effect of this protection is greatly to enhance the value of the slave. Could the doors be thrown open to free trade on this, what the South now regards as property or merchandise, the slave that is now sold in New Orleans for \$500 would not be worth more than \$100 or \$200.

Could I be convinced of the correctness of the southern doctrines now advanced, I should insist upon having this monopoly broken up. Sir, this is a subject which I have examined thoroughly. I agree entirely with Jefferson, "that there is no attribute of Deity that can take sides with the slaveholder."

I sincerely believe the whole system, at home and abroad, in all its ramifications, to be morally, politically, and religiously wrong. One of the first votes I ever gave was for its extinction in my own State; and were I a resident of Virginia, my voice should be heard in favor of emancipation. Sir, I would not say an unkind word to our southern friends on this or any other subject. We are all members of the great family who compose the Republic; we are alike interested in the welfare and prosperity of the whole; but upon these great questions we must speak freely and frankly.

What has been the policy heretofore pursued with regard to this subject? When we acquired slave territory, we have left it undisturbed, with the exception of a portion of Louisiana. Why should we not be permitted to pursue the same policy with free territory? Under this policy we have acquired Florida and Texas recently, and at an earlier day Louisiana. We are now called upon to provide a Territorial Government for Oregon, and shall soon be required to do the same for our Mexican Territories, in all of which slavery has been repudiated by the people. We now ask the same liberality from the South that they have received from us. We say let it remain free. Why ask us to aid in spreading over these domains an institution which your own patriotic statesmen declare to be the greatest possible evil—an institution which they admit is depopulating and devastating the fairest portion of the South? Can the South ask us as "joint owners" of this "common property," to consent to such an injury upon the "common" interest?

There is another view of this subject which must not be omitted. I allude to it, not for the purpose of disturbing existing constitutional compromises. Unequal and unjust as these are, we must abide them in good faith. But has the slave power any

* I have seen it stated, on the authority of a southern man, that 60,000 blacks passed through a single town, and in a single year, on their way to the slave markets of the South. I do not vouch for the correctness of these statements. It has always been the policy, in the African as well as the American slave trade, to keep everything in the dark as much as possible. I hope the next census will give us some light on this subject. Why should the South be ashamed to let us know the extent of this branch of her commerce? They give us statistics showing the extent of their cotton crop—why not as to their slave crop?

right to expect the free States will ever consent to extend the gross inequalities and injustice so manifest in this arrangement? I admit, the object which the slave States have in view is one of immense magnitude to them. If attained, it will give them the control of the Government forever. The southern people understand and appreciate the importance of this subject in this aspect. They come up to it united to a man. Every nerve is exerted. A southern statesman, in discussing it, said "there are no traitors among us."

I avail myself of an article on this subject, prepared by an able writer, to which I desire to call the attention of the committee:

"**SLAVE REPRESENTATION.**—By the Constitution of the United States, in the appointment of representatives to Congress, five slaves count the same as three freemen. This is a provision unknown in former national codes, resting on a principle—undemocratic, detrimental to liberty, and hitherto unheard of: the principle of allowing parts of a nation political power in proportion to the number of men which they hold in bondage. It would have astonished the Heathen Democracy of Athens long centuries ago. By this arrangement, from 1789 to 1792, the South gained seven representatives in the first Congress; from 1795 to 1813, fourteen; from 1813 to 1823, nineteen; from 1823 to 1833, twenty-two; from 1833 to 1843, twenty-five. By the last apportionment bill, one representative is allowed for 70,680 freemen, or a proportionate number of slaves. By this arrangement, in a House of only 225 members, the South gains twenty representatives on account of her slaves—more than one-twelfth part of the whole.

"At present, the North has 138 representatives for 9,728,922 souls, or 9,727,893 freemen; one representative for each 70,492 freemen. The South has 87 representatives. There are within the slave States 4,848,105 freemen; they have one representative for each 55,725 free persons.

"In the next Presidential election, the North will have 166 electoral votes; the South 117. The North has an electoral vote for each 52,576 free men; the South one for each 41,433. Part of this difference is due to the fact, that in the South there are several small States. But twenty electoral votes are given by the South, on account of her property in slaves. But if slaves are merely property, there is no reason why southern negroes should be represented in Congress more than the spindles in the North.

"But the South pays direct taxes for her slaves in the same proportion. A direct tax has been resorted to only four times since 1789 by the General Government, viz: in 1793, 1813, 1814, and 1816. The whole amount assessed was \$14,000,000. Of this about \$12,750,000 was actually paid into the treasury of the United States, though in part a depreciated currency. Of that the South paid for her slaves, if the computation be correct, only \$1,256,553.

"In 1837 the surplus revenue of the Union, amounting to \$37,468,859 97, was distributed among the several States in proportion to their electoral votes. By the census of 1830, the North had 7,008,451 free persons, and the South but 3,823,239. The free States received \$21,410,777 12, and the slave States \$16,058,032 85. Each free man of the North received but \$3 50, while each free man of the South \$4 20 in that division.

"At that time the South had one hundred and twenty-six electoral votes, of which twenty-five were on account of her slave representation. She therefore received by that arrangement \$3,186,127 50 on account of the representation of her slaves. From that, if we deduct the \$1,256,553 paid by her as a direct tax on her slaves, there is left \$1,929,574 50, as the bonus which the South has received from the treasury of the nation on account of the representation of slaves—southern property represented in Congress. To this we add \$57,556 which the South received in 1842 from the sale of public lands on account of her slaves; the sum is \$1,987,130 59. Mr. Pinckney was right when he said the terms were not bad for the South."—*Parker's Letters.*

Sir, there is another consideration connected with this subject which, with me, is conclusive. I have already alluded to the position that New York occupies with regard to this subject. She has defined her position in a manner that cannot be misunderstood or misrepresented. Through the medium of two successive Legislatures she has declared, almost unanimously, her opposition to the extension of slavery over free Territories. Sir, the Empire State has instructed her Senators and requested her Representatives in Congress to resist

such extension. In February, 1847, joint resolutions were passed by both branches of the New York Legislature, among which were the following:

"*Resolved, (if the Assembly concur,) That if any Territory is hereafter acquired by the United States, or annexed thereto, the act by which such Territory is acquired or annexed, whatever such act may be, should contain an unalterable fundamental article or provision whereby slavery or involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime, shall be forever excluded from the Territory acquired or annexed.*"

"*Resolved, (if the Assembly concur,) That the Senators in Congress from this State be instructed, and that the Representatives in Congress from this State be requested, to use their best efforts to carry into effect the views expressed in the foregoing resolution.*"

This resolution of instruction passed the Senate unanimously. Three votes in the Senate and nine in the House, out of twenty-six in the Senate and one hundred and five in the House, were given against the proposed restriction. I believe all but one who voted against them, avowed themselves in favor of the principle. I do not know but a single individual in that body who then denied the power of Congress to restrict or exclude slavery from our Territories. The people of the State were equally unanimous; a few presses were disposed to complain, but even these did not dare to array themselves against the principle. The few Senators who endeavored to defeat the resolutions, made the strongest speeches that were made during the discussion against the whole system of slavery, and declared their determination to oppose its extension at "THE PROPER TIME." This was the language of every conservative press in New York, and elsewhere. "Wait until we acquire the territory, and then we are with you," was their language everywhere. That moment has arrived; and where are they now? They have suddenly discovered that "Congress has no power over the subject." This enables them to occupy the slaveholder's platform, and there I shall leave them. A few of our politicians have taken position there, but the people are inflexibly opposed to any such mode of extending an institution they detest. Similar resolutions of instruction and restriction passed both branches of the New York Legislature at its late session—five in the House, and one only in the Senate, voting against them.

The Democracy of New York wish to settle this question in the constitutional way. If we are voted down, we shall submit quietly to a majority, who have the right to control. If we succeed in excluding this monstrous evil from the country for which we are acting, we, I am sure, shall have the thanks of the civilized world; the successive generations who are to dwell there will express their gratitude for our acts. And I do not doubt that the South, seeing they have no good cause of complaint, will be satisfied; but if not satisfied, they can rebel if they choose; upon them will be the responsibility and the risk. Should we ever be brought into conflict upon this question, as is often threatened from that quarter, (but never from the North,) no one can fail to see what would be the result. What could the South do, with one-half their population slaves? Sir, should this conflict ever come, the South would be swept of its slaveholders in less time than it has taken to conquer Mexico; not a vestige of the institution would ever again be seen on this continent. But I trust in Heaven that we may never be brought to such a crisis. It is certain we never shall, unless the *insanity* of the South bring it upon themselves. I will not dwell upon this topic. I allude to it only to show the character of

this argument, which we hear so often repeated, and rung upon a thousand changes. It has in times past produced some effect; it frightens the timid, and drives them from their duty; but with me it passes by as the idle wind. "*Dissolve the Union*"—"A dissolution of the Union," is the parrot-cry whenever this topic is broached. This argument was tried on another occasion, when the Constitution and laws of the country were threatened with "*nullification*." The crisis came, and, fortunately for the country, we found a man at the helm equal to the emergency. "The Union, it *must* and *shall* be preserved," was his emphatic proclamation. If treason was concocted, it was nipt in the bud by the gigantic mind then at the head of our Government. I do not say that if the South desired to withdraw from the Union peaceably and quietly, she would be resisted; but let the South declare the Union dissolved, and resort to arms to enforce their unlawful and unjust demands, and their own destruction would be sealed. Would these three millions of people, whom the gentleman from North Carolina says "*Providence*" has committed to their care, lose the opportunity to free themselves from degradation and "*bondage*?" That "*Providence*" that he relies upon might think it proper to reverse the order of things.

The gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. CLINGMAN] again remarks: "We might be forced to destroy many of them, as Rome did in her servile wars." Instead of being *destroyed*, they might, in such case, become *destroyers*, as did the Amistad prisoners. "*Providence*," for a while, seemed to have committed these unhappy beings to the control of a white race, after having been torn by force from their own native land, and from all that makes life worth possessing; but when an opportunity presented, "*Providence*" seemed to favor their rescue, by enabling them to throw their oppressors overboard: and who could ever blame them?

I feel compelled, sir, here to call the attention of the House to an extraordinary publication which has been laid on our tables. I allude to the appendix of a speech recently delivered on this floor by an honorable member from Louisiana, [Mr. MORSE.] In that article the gentleman says: "We will never permit our slaves to be liberated directly or indirectly." "We would rather die in the last ditch than surrender, not our property, but the principle on which we hold it." This gentleman then goes on to mark out a policy for the South to pursue, which is worthy of attention. He says, "We can make a treaty with England, or any other nation in Europe, by which the right to our slaves shall never be questioned, and by which we can receive all the manufactures of England at a reasonable duty, and she will buy our cotton and do our carrying trade." And what further? "The English navy would defend us."

Sir, I do not believe the intelligent portion of the South will thank the gentleman for this proposition. I do not believe they are prepared to bow their necks quietly to the yoke of Britain so soon after escaping from it. I think they will pause and reflect before they become "hewers of wood and drawers of water" to Britain. If, however, they desire to follow his lead, I say, let them go. I would place no barriers in their way. This plan looks very much like one said to have had its origin "*down East*," near the close of the late war with Britain, and which has immortalized its authors. They proposed, it was said, a similar plan to the one here submitted by the South. The author of this famous plan was educated in the free States.

It does not, however, appear that he was attached to the Hartford Convention school; but he seems to have adopted their project. I wish him much success as well as the South, if she follows him in his noble enterprise thus marked out for his countrymen; and should they ever reach this enviable position, I hope they will find the British yoke less galling than did our noble sires.

Sir, if the gentleman will permit me, I will call his attention to one article which he will find necessary in his "English treaty"—he must stipulate that the "English navy" shall protect the South from these people who seem to have been "consigned" by "Providence" to their special care. Such an arrangement would make an important chapter in British history, and would doubtless contribute to bring about the gentleman's "*treaty*." They would have one arm of the navy on the coast of Africa suppressing slavery, and one on our coasts upholding and protecting slavery. The diplomatic powers of the South would easily obviate all this apparent inconsistency: they could point to the Indies and say, You protect the revelries of Juggernaut by your bayonets—why not protect our slavery? I am not certain but that John Bull would strike up a bargain with the slave States, provided he was allowed to fit the yoke to the necks of his new customers.

There is one paragraph, however, in this appendix, which the gentleman from Louisiana would probably have to withdraw. The honorable member, [Mr. MORSE,] like the gentleman from Virginia, [Mr. BAYLY,] charges this whole movement on the part of the free States to "foreign or English influence;" and yet, in the same breath, offers a quiet submission to their yoke. Sir, all this flourish of rebellion and treason will be properly appreciated here and elsewhere. It is the old story repeated for the thousandth time. It is well known to this gentleman, and all he claims to represent, that no one wishes or proposes to meddle with slavery where the Constitution has provided for it. Let the slave States cling to it as long as they please. Let it go on depopulating and degrading them in the eyes of the civilized world, until they shall see their position and interest. Whether the ardent aspirations of Washington, Lafayette, Jefferson, Patrick Henry, the Randolphs, and all the early patriots even of the South, for its termination, shall ever be realized, remains to be seen. This must be determined exclusively by their successors. We wash our hands from all responsibility in the matter.

Mr. Chairman, I cannot close my remarks without alluding to the extraordinary language of the gentleman from Vermont [Mr. MARSH] as applicable to a distinguished statesman of my own State, now no more. I allude to a man who was proud to reckon the Green Mountain State as the home of his youth. Sir, that State was waiting the appropriate time when she would have conferred her highest honors upon her distinguished son. I was pained to hear the talented gentleman from Vermont assail the fair fame of that eminently great and honest man. The insinuation that he or his friends conspired to destroy a rival for the Presidency—the latter by voting for the restriction of slavery, and he by concealing his own views—is a gross and palpable mistake. I will give his words as he was reported at the time:

"Some were actuated by a propelling force operating at home; others, for the sake of disposing of an obnoxious western candidate for the Presidency, who had committed himself by a vote in the Senate, while their northern candidate lay snugly perdu, and escaped the responsibility."

It is difficult to conceive, what motive could have prompted this attack upon the distinguished dead. I do not say the honorable gentleman knew this charge to be without the slightest foundation in fact, but such was the case. It is possible that the gentleman, having been brought up in a school where such tactics prevail, naturally supposed that others were moved by impulses which would "propel" him under similar circumstances; but the gentleman is as far from being correct in this instance as in many others. No man could ever charge Mr. Wright with this species of dissimulation. With regard to his views and course on this great question, I have a word to say. I was in Albany at the time the restriction resolutions of the Senate were under discussion. Mr. Wright, upon this as upon all other great questions, did not hesitate to declare his opinions freely and frankly, although, as the gentleman says, in private life. He had nothing to do with originating the discussion here; but when the question came before the country, he did not hesitate a moment as to the line of his duty. With his patriotism and love of country, how could he trample down the precepts of Jefferson, and go for enslaving the fairest portions of our continent now free? Sir, those who knew him during the few months he survived, know that he cordially approved the principles of the joint resolutions of the Legislature. At Albany and at home his views were as well known as are those of the gentleman himself. No man in the Union was more firmly convinced of the great evils of the slave system than he, and had he lived, he would have been an inflexible opponent to its extension. Does not the gentleman know that there was no necessity for such duplicity? Mr. Wright was offered the Vice Presidency and the Presidency at the Convention of 1844. He would have been offered the Presidency again, if he had lived; but he had no wish ever again to leave his retirement, and this was supposed to have been his determination. One thing is certain, he never would have sacrificed his conscience and integrity upon this or any other subject.

Mr. Chairman, I feel called upon, as the friend of Governor Wright, whose reputation is not only the pride of the Empire State, but of the whole American people, to repel this attempt to tarnish his fair fame. The following is an extract from a letter written by him to a friend on the 15th day of April, 1847. This, I trust, will settle the question forever, so far as his views were concerned. He will go down to future generations on the page of history by the side of Washington and Jefferson and all the great patriots of our country, on this important subject:

"CANTON, April 15, 1847.

"MY DEAR SIR: Your letter of the 10th, and its enclosures, came to me to-day, and I hasten to reply. None of the articles to which you allude had met my notice, although Mr. Bryant sends to me the semi-weekly Post. I was not aware, therefore, that my opinions on the subject of the Wilmot proviso had become a matter of newspaper discussion. I certainly was not aware that they could be a matter of dispute or doubt. I have not been ambitious to promulgate my opinions upon this or any public subject; but I have not, at any time, as you are a double witness, withheld the expression of them upon this subject when called upon to express them.

"If the question has been propounded to me at any period of my public life, Shall the arms of the Union be employed to conquer, or the money of the Union be used to purchase territory now constitutionally free, for the purpose of planting slavery upon it? I should have answered, No! And this answer to this question is the Wilmot proviso, as I understand it. I am surprised that any one should suppose me capable of entertaining any other opinion, or giving any other answer, as to such a proposition.

"The two conversations to which you allude, the one had

with yourself at Major Flagg's, and the other held at the boarding-house of Messrs. Townsend, Small, Stewart, and Keyser, are fresh in my recollection, and in both of which I expressed frankly the opinions I entertained, both in relation to the proviso and Colonel Young's resolutions; and those opinions were decidedly favorable to both.

"I have repeatedly stated in such conversations, and I think I did to you in the conversation at Major Flagg's, that Mr. King, in making himself the author of the movement at the last session of Congress, had acted without any consultation with me; and that if I could have had my personal choice, I should have preferred that he would have left that to some other person, because it would be, and was charged, that he was acting from motives not avowed, and through my impulsion; yet that I had no complaint to make against Mr. King, and no right to ask him to yield his sense of duty to my personal wishes, because I knew his opinions and the strength of his feelings upon that subject, and was therefore satisfied that he was acting from the most sincere, conscientious convictions of right, and that I considered his movement right in itself, and sound in principle.

"I am surprised at the Globe articles, as, with the exception of such remarks as I have just repeated as to Mr. King's being the mover of the proviso, I can have said nothing from which any man could infer any disapprobation on my part of Mr. King's course; and I trust these remarks cannot properly be denominated a disapprobation of his act, much less of his proposition."

Mr. Chairman, unwilling as I am to detain the committee, I cannot allow this occasion to pass without an examination of the effects of this institution upon men enjoying the blessings of liberty. No consideration whatever shall prevent an inquiry into the nature and tendencies of the system in all its bearings. The light of reason and humanity must be allowed to shine upon the subject; the power of slavery, strong as it is, cannot prevent it. The few facts and statistics which I shall bring forward, show that this institution tends to freeze the best sympathies of the master and dealer in human flesh and blood. Then the injury, deep and dreadful as it is to the slave, is still greater to the dealer. Allow me to illustrate this view of the subject by a reference to the slave trade, the prolific parent of the institution here and elsewhere. The leading Powers of the civilized world have entered into a compact for the more effectual suppression of the slave trade. Great Britain, although not first in the field, has for many years taken the lead in this great work, so far as the extent of her operations are concerned. The number of English ships of war employed in this service on the coast of Africa, for the year 1845, was 56, carrying 886 guns, and 9,289 men. The cost of sustaining this force for the year was \$3,139,795. In the year 1844, 27 vessels were adjudicated before the mixed commission at Sierra Leone; 26 were condemned, and 2,551 slaves were liberated. The total number of vessels there prosecuted, from June, 1819, to Dec. 31, 1844, was 498; 473 were condemned. During this period, 63,436 slaves were emancipated at this single point. It appears from the reports of these commissioners, as well as from our own officers, that the slave trade is still carried on very extensively. From the best information I can get, I am satisfied that near one hundred thousand Africans are annually smuggled off the coast of Africa and sold into bondage. The average price of slaves at Rio de Janeiro is about \$253. At this rate, the amount of sales in all the markets must reach near twenty-eight millions of dollars annually.

Commodore Jones, (of the British navy,) in a despatch bearing date August 28, 1845, says:

"From the first of April, last year, to the latest returns, seventy-five vessels engaged in the slave trade have been detained or destroyed by the cruisers of this squadron. I venture to assume that these vessels would have carried off an average of five hundred slaves each. Consequently, their capture has prevented the removal of 37,500 human beings, who would have been transferred into bondage. The

Portuguese squadron made a few captures on the coast of Angola. The French none." "The American squadron employed on this station has made one capture. The American officers appear to be sincerely desirous of aiding in the suppression, as far as authorized to do so; but their powers are limited to vessels under their own flag which may be engaged in the slave trade."

The British Government are entitled to the commendation of the civilized world for their great exertions to suppress this inhuman and diabolical trade, which has so long disgraced our race. While we regret and deplore the effects of her colonial policy as regards this trade, it is gratifying to see her making some atonement for the enormous evil which she inflicted on us while colonies. Her exertions have been continued through a period of twenty-eight years; and if the expenditure for 1845 is an average, the Government must have expended near eighty-seven millions of dollars in this service.

The British law does not make it a capital offence in all cases to be caught in this fiendish traffic. The property of the captured is confiscated; the slaves liberated; the crews sent to Sierra Leone or other ports; so that they are ready to ship on board the next slaver offered. With her own citizens, she makes it felony. This policy, in my judgment, should be changed. It should be known throughout the world that the man who should be detected and convicted of such crime, should be instantly swung from the yard-arm. This is the only course that can ever suppress this infamous traffic.

The English commissioner at Rio de Janeiro, in his report of March 21, 1845, says:

"That 16,218 slaves were landed at Rio de Janeiro and adjacent ports during the year 1844. These were brought direct from different African ports, in forty-three vessels; four of these were American. To this should be added the usual number who die on the passage, which is frequently one-third. One of these vessels landed 339 slaves; they were so emaciated and reduced, that only 120 could be sold."

The commissioners say, the practice is to collect, at different points on the African coast, large deposits of slaves ready for shipment. They say that in November the agent of Fonescas (a slave merchant at Rio) had ready for shipment, near Quillemane, 2,800 negroes. This fiend in human form boasted that he had made, in the slave trade alone, over \$650,000 in the year 1844. Great numbers are taken to Cuba, and various other places. Whether any find their way to Texas and Florida, I am not able to say. I should not be surprised if it were so. The commissioners say:

"The most successful adventures are those carried on with the assistance of the American flag. The plan has been to employ two vessels, send them to Africa with cargoes adapted to the slave marts, taking out equipments for bringing back a cargo of slaves. One of these vessels sails along the coast and sells the cargo; the other remains stationary, as a store-ship, where the negroes are collecting on shore. As soon as a favorable opportunity is offered, the slaves are put on board, and the vessel proceeds to the private rendezvous in Brazil."

This, sir, was the position of affairs when Mr. Wise (our minister plenipotentiary) reached Rio de Janeiro in 1844. He was indignant at this outrageous prostitution of the flag of his country. He made the most strenuous efforts to arrest this disgraceful traffic, as his despatches show. In a letter addressed to Mr. Calhoun, then Secretary of State, dated Rio de Janeiro, November 1, 1844, referring to accompanying papers, he says:

"These papers but too clearly show how the African slave trade is carried on in Brazil, and how shamefully the flag of the United States is prostituted to its infamous uses. Our flag is made to protect a Brazilian vessel, with a crew and perfect outfit of slave-deck, water-casks, irons, &c., to the

African coast. Our laws should be modified to meet this way of aiding and abetting the slave trade."

Mr. Wise begs the attention of Congress may be called to the subject. Again, he says:

"I would wage a war to defend the sanctity of its protection to our trade against any right of search by any Power on earth. And shall our own sons be allowed to furnish a pretext for visit and search, even possibly tenable, by repeatedly, and openly, and notoriously prostituting it to the purposes of an odious traffic, full of the most abominable crimes? Is that flag to be struck, not to an ene my, but to the slave trade? Is it bought and sold for the price of infamy, which should turn it the true color of the pirate's flag, blood-red all over with the blushes of shame?"

This frank and manly expression of indignation is worthy of the minister and the country he represented. These sentiments find a hearty response in every American bosom which is not seared as with a burning iron.

On the 19th of February, 1845, President Tyler, in a special message, called the attention of the American Congress to these outrages upon our flag; but that appears to be the end of the matter.

President Tyler justly censures this traffic, as "revolting to humanity." He says: "Our own coasts are free from its pollution;" but adds: "the crime remains the same wherever perpetrated." So I believe. The gist of the crime is in buying and selling our fellow-men—reducing them to goods and chattels. "Wherever this is done, it is equally criminal," says the President. The divine right of kings has become an obsolete idea. The divine right of the slaveholder has been boldly revived on this floor by the gentleman from Tennessee, [Mr. HASKELL.] I trust the gentleman will be permitted to stand alone in his glory. I cannot believe that the slaveholders of this body will attempt to sustain him.

I would ask the gentleman to go with me, and examine and contemplate the horrors of the middle passage, the agonizing and heartrending scenes of suffering, misery, and wretchedness, nay crimes of the most diabolical description, and then tell me if title to this species of property is thus acquired under the divine sanction. In the language of President Bolivar, I would say to these gentlemen, "Man to be possessed of his fellow man! Man to be made property of! The image of the Deity to be put under the yoke! Let these usurpers show us their title deeds."

I will here add a brief description of some of the fiendish horrors of the trade, as related by an eyewitness, who was examined on board the United States frigate Raritan, in the harbor of Rio de Janeiro, on the 13th February, 1845, before Mr. Gordon, our consul. This is not a story, got up for effect, but a relation of facts:

"Deponent said, that a majority of the slaves were brought on board during the night in launches, near the fort at Fuhambam. There were about five hundred in all that came on board. When they came on board, they were put down on the slave-deck, all in irons. There were from one hundred and fifty to two hundred women. They were fed twice a day with farina, rice, and dried beef, all boiled together.

"Deponent further said, that the next day after the vessel crossed the bar, the negroes rose upon the officers and crew; a majority of the men, all of whom were in irons, got their irons off, broke through the bulkhead into the female department, and into the fore-castle. Upon this, the captain armed the crew and officers with cutlasses, muskets, and pistols. The crew were firing down among them for half an hour. The Brazilian sailors seemed to like the sport. In about half an hour they were subdued, and became quiet. The slaves were then brought on deck, eight or ten at a time, and ironed afresh. They were all re-ironed that afternoon and put below, except seven, who remained on deck. None were killed on this occasion; eight or ten were wounded. The reason why none were killed, they had to fire through the hatches, and the negroes got out of the way. The next day they were brought on deck, two or three dozen at a time,

all being well ironed, and tried by Captain Fonseca and his officers, and within two or three days afterwards, forty-six men and one woman were hung and shot, and thrown overboard. They were ironed or chained two together, and when they were hung, a rope was put round their necks, and they were drawn up to the yard-arm clear of the sail. This did not kill them, but only choked or strangled them. They were then shot in the breast, and thrown overboard. If only one of two that were chained together was to be hung, a rope was put round his neck, and he was drawn up beside of the bulwarks, and his leg laid across the rail and chopped off, to save the irons, and release him from his companion, who at the same time lifted up his leg until the other was chopped off as aforesaid, and he released. The bleeding negro was then drawn up, shot in the breast, and thrown overboard. The legs of about a dozen were chopped off in this way. When the feet fell on deck, they were picked up by the crew and thrown overboard, and sometimes at the body, while it still hung living, and all kinds of sport was made of the business. When two that were chained together were both to be hung, they were hung up together by their necks, shot, and thrown overboard, irons and all. When the woman was hung up and shot, the ball did not take effect, and she was thrown overboard living, and was seen to struggle some time in the water before she sunk. After this they brought up and flogged about twenty men and six women. When flogged, they were laid flat on the deck, their hands tied and secured to a ring-bolt, and their feet to another; they were then whipped by two men at a time, by one with a stick about two feet long, with five or six strands of raw hide secured to the end—the hide was dry and hard, and about two feet long; and by the other, with a piece of the hide of a sea-horse—this was a strip about four feet long, from half an inch to an inch wide, as thick as one's finger, or thicker, and flexible. The flogging was very severe; all the women that were flogged died, but none of the men; many of them were sick all the passage, and were obliged to lie on their bellies during the remainder of the voyage, and some of them could hardly get on shore. The flesh of some of them where they were flogged (which was on their posteriors) putrified, and came off in some cases six to eight inches in diameter, and half an inch in thickness. Their wounds were dressed and filled up with farina and cachaca made into poultices. When applied to the poor creatures, they would shiver and tremble, and groan in the most intense agony. They were a shocking and horrible sight during the whole voyage."

Such are some of the horrors and crimes which appear to be inseparably connected with the slave trade as it now exists. This is the process of acquiring this *Divine* title. This whole race in this country were originally brought here, and title to them acquired in this way. Why is it that these demons in human form could perpetrate such enormities without remorse? The God of Nature did not thus create them. But by participating in cruelties like these, every feeling of the heart was perverted, and they become mere brutes of prey. What could wring the bosom of another with agony was pleasure and joy to them.

Let us call off our minds from these soul-sickening scenes in foreign lands—from the slave ship and the barracoon on the coast of Africa—and transfer them to a kindred theme at home. We all loathe and detest the very names of a barracoon or slave pen on a barbarous coast, and in the midst of a barbarous people. Yet some are disposed to regard these same objects with complacency and indulgence if located under the walls of our capital. We denounce as a felon the hand that raises our beloved flag to the mast-head of the slaver, while this glorious emblem of freedom which daily floats over our Hall is relied upon to protect similar transactions here. The breaking up of families; the tearing asunder the endearing ties of parent and child, brother and sister, husband and wife, under cover of the midnight darkness by gangs of hired ruffians, is a revolting spectacle to most of us. The same principle, however, is inseparably connected with the system everywhere. Here it may assume a milder form than on the coast of Africa, but not less objectionable—not less criminal in the sight of Heaven.

I will illustrate this point by describing a scene

which is, I believe, a very common occurrence in the slave States. I will give it in the language of an eye-witness, suppressing names, as I would not wish to injure the feelings of any one. The traveller said:

"I witnessed a scene such as I never witnessed before, and never wish to again. Having passed through the town of —, the sound of music (beyond a rising ground) attracted my attention. I looked forward, and saw the flag of my country waving. Supposing that I was about to meet a military parade, I drove hastily to the side of the road, and having gained the top of the ascent, I discovered about forty black men, all chained together; each of them was handcuffed, and they were arranged in rank and file; a chain perhaps forty feet long was stretched between the two ranks, to which short chains were attached, and connected with the handcuffs. Behind them were about thirty women in double rank, the couples tied hand to hand. A solemn sadness sat on every countenance, and the dismal silence of this march of despair was interrupted only by the sound of two violins. As if to add insult to injury, the foremost couple were furnished with violins, the second were ornamented with cockades, while near the centre waved the flag of our country, carried by a hand literally in chains."

The traveller said:

"My soul sickened at the sight, and as an American, I felt indignant to see the flag of my beloved country thus insulted. I could not forbear exclaiming to the lordly driver, who rode along-side at his case, Heaven will curse that man who engages in such traffic."

Mr. Chairman, would not Mr. Wise himself have felt the same emotions? Could he have made any distinction between the case he so eloquently described and this. President Tyler justly denounces such scenes as "revolting to humanity," when enacted in savage Africa; could he say less of this? It is said, I know, that our Constitution tolerates it here; so it may be said that the laws of Africa tolerate it there. What right have we to nullify the slave laws of Africa while we are seeking to perpetuate and extend our own?

I would like to inquire of the honorable member from South Carolina, [Mr. RHETT,] who never moves without the "*Constitution*" in his hand, if he can point me to the section which authorizes us to go into a foreign country, and treat its citizens, as well as our own, as "*pirates*," for dealing in what he and they call "*property*?"

Since we have held our seats in this Hall, hundreds, and perhaps thousands, of these miserable beings have been torn from their relatives, brought to the barracoons, or, as they are here called, slave pens, and from thence taken to Baltimore, and other ports, and there shipped for New Orleans, and other slave markets, under the protection of this glorious emblem of our Republic.

The diabolical and fiendish crimes incident to the African trade may not attach to this branch; but who can deny that the moral and religious principle involved is not the same in both cases? In this aspect, President Tyler was right in saying, "the crime remains the same wherever perpetrated."

Mr. Chairman, one of these slave pens may be found in the heart of this city—the boasted seat of freedom in the New World—where hundreds are annually collected, and sent off in "gangs" of from five to fifty to the great rendezvous at Baltimore. It occupies a conspicuous place adjoining the public ground of the city, within a stone's throw of the Smithsonian Institution. It is overlooked by the President's House, Treasury, the War, and Navy Departments; by the General Post Office and Patent Office, where is suspended the original Declaration of Independence; and lastly, by the noble Capitol, in which Congress hold their daily sessions, and over which floats the stars and the stripes so eloquently described by Mr. Wise in

his despatches. Could those gloomy cells speak to us, they would disclose a tale of wretchedness, misery, agony, and despair, that would draw tears from the eyes of even a slaveholder. The God of Justice will not always sleep over such scenes of indelible wrong. Language is too feeble to convey any adequate idea of the horrors of the slave trade at home or abroad. Who can contemplate this state of things without feelings of regret, sincere regret, at the existence of the institution here? Who can say it is not a reproach to our national character? Who can wish to extend it?

I again repeat, sir, that it is no part of my object to wound the feelings of southern men, or speak disrespectfully of their country. In discussing this question, I have found it necessary to speak freely and frankly of their institution of slavery. I have, in the main, adopted the language of the great and good men of the South. My sole object has been to satisfy the committee and the country that we cannot consistently, and ought not to extend it further. For taking this stand, the Democracy of New York are denounced as "Barnburners," as "*Instruments of England*;" as "*aiming a blow at the Confederacy*," with divers other hard names and epithets, which I must be excused from bandying with the gentleman from Virginia, or others who use them. These opprobrious terms do not disturb us. We have been used to them at home. Indeed they were coined and applied to us because we were for an economical and prudent prosecution of our internal-improvement system; because we taxed ourselves to preserve our State credit; because we insisted upon a rigid responsibility from banks and moneyed corporations; because we were for restricting the power of the Legislature to contract debts; because we were for other important and radical reforms. Our principles have triumphed there, and they will here, sooner or later. Personally, I entertain no other than the kindest feelings towards these gentlemen, one and all. I was early taught to look to the great men of the South for Democratic doctrines. I honor the memory of their early patriots, but I regret the course pursued by their successors. They have erected a platform—a creed unknown to early and primitive Democracy.* Against this

*SOUTHERN PLATFORM.

Resolutions of the Legislature of Virginia.

"Resolved, unanimously, That under no circumstances will this body recognize as binding any enactment by the Federal Government which has for its object the prohibition of slavery in any territory to be acquired either by conquest or treaty; holding it to be the natural and indefeasible right of each and every citizen of every State of this Confederacy to reside with his property, of whatever description, [meaning slaves] in any territory which may be acquired by the arms of the United States, or yielded by treaty with any foreign power."

"13. Be it further resolved, That as one of the means of protecting the institutions of the South, we pledge ourselves not to support, at the ensuing Presidential election, any man

we protest; and we mean what we say, when we declare it shall never receive our sanction. We shall resist it by every constitutional means in our power. If we fail, we shall have the satisfaction of knowing that we have done our duty to our country and our God.

for the Presidency or Vice Presidency, who is not avowedly opposed to the principles of the Wilmot Proviso, and who will not previously pledge himself to veto any law repealing the act of Congress of 1793, providing for the restoration of slaves to their owners."

Resolutions of the Virginia Democratic Convention.

"7th. That, as republicans and citizens of one of the free and equal States of this Union, we do most earnestly protest against the Wilmot and Wilmot Provisos, as wanton violations of the Constitution, and wilful assaults on the rights and interests of one portion of our Confederacy; and do most solemnly declare that there is no power, either in Congress, or a Territorial Legislature, which is its creature, or anywhere else, save only in the people of a Territory in the adoption of a State constitution preparatory to admission into the Union, to prevent the migration of any citizen of any State, with his property, whether it be slaves, or anything else, to any domain which may be acquired by the common blood and treasure of the people of all the States.

"8th. That this convention heartily responds to the noble resolutions of the Alabama State Democratic Convention, and will 'under no political necessity whatever,' support, either for the Presidency or Vice Presidency, any person who shall not be the firm and avowed opponent of any plan or doctrine, which in any way interferes with the right of citizens of any one State to possess and enjoy all their property in any territory which may be acquired by the Union, as fully, completely, and securely as citizens of any other State shall enjoy theirs—except so far as that, being unwilling to disturb the Missouri Compromise, we are content with adherence to its principles."

A Resolution of the Alabama Legislature.

"Be it further resolved, That under no circumstances will this body recognize as binding any enactment of the Federal Government which has for its object the prohibition of slavery in any territory to be acquired either by conquest or treaty, holding it to be the natural and indefeasible right of each citizen of each and every State of the Confederacy to reside with his property, of every description, in any territory which may be acquired by the arms of the United States, or yielded by treaty with any foreign Power."

A Resolution of the Alabama Democratic Convention.

"Resolved, That this convention pledges itself to the country, and its members pledge themselves to each other, ~~to~~ under no political necessity whatever, to support for the offices of President and Vice President of the United States, any person who shall not openly and avowedly be opposed to either of the forms of excluding slavery from the territories of the United States, ~~as~~ as being alike in violation of the Constitution, and of the just and equal rights of the citizens of the slaveholding States."

A Resolution of the Georgia Legislature.

"Be it further resolved by the authority aforesaid, That any territory acquired, or to be acquired, by the arms of the United States, or by treaty with a foreign Power, becomes the common property of the several States composing this Confederacy; and whilst it so continues, it is the right of each citizen of each and every State to reside with his property, of every description, within such territory."

Resolutions similar to the Alabama convention resolution, were passed by most of the slave States. Both parties unite upon these doctrines, and in repudiating any candidate who does not avow them.